View-Master Science Series
Updated May 2021
By J. Clement

View-Master produced a series of packets illustrating the history and aspects of science. Many were packaged under the name “World of Science” or “Science Series” and covered geology, physics, chemistry… Some were just labeled by science topic. They often drew on existing natural shots from scenic reels, while some scenes were made expressly for this series. At least one packet used dioramas as illustrations of the science. The space series used NASA 3D shots. Some NASA shots used a true 3D camera, while others were created from two different pictures as the camera moved. The pictures are generally uncredited.

Some sets of pictures were released as illustrations for a book such as the mushroom series. In addition, there are later science reels such as Windows on the Sea published by other companies.

1956 920-A 6 Battle of the Monsters - Which fled to the safety of the prehistoric swamp

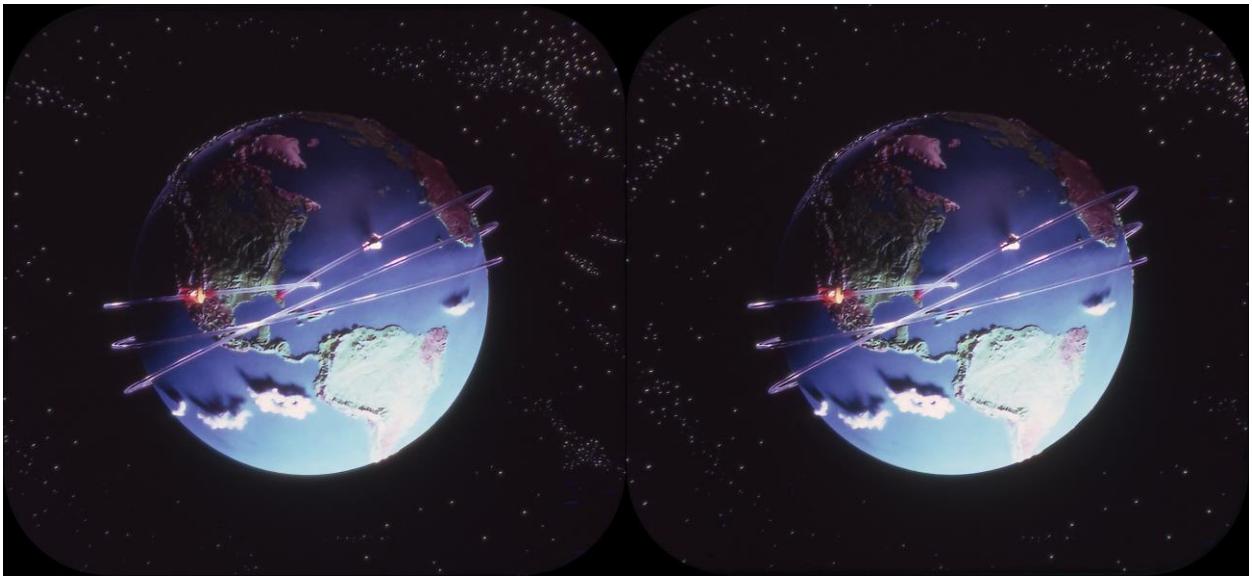
This was from the Warner Brothers movie “The Animal World”. by Irwin Allen, Ray Harryhausen, and Willis O'Brien. The pictures were created in 1956 and released as shots from this stop motion animated segment of the movie. The booklet by Sawyers gave scientific background as understood at that time along with the story.

1956 B6191 Prehistoric Animals 2 For 120 million years these dinosaurs ruled the Earth

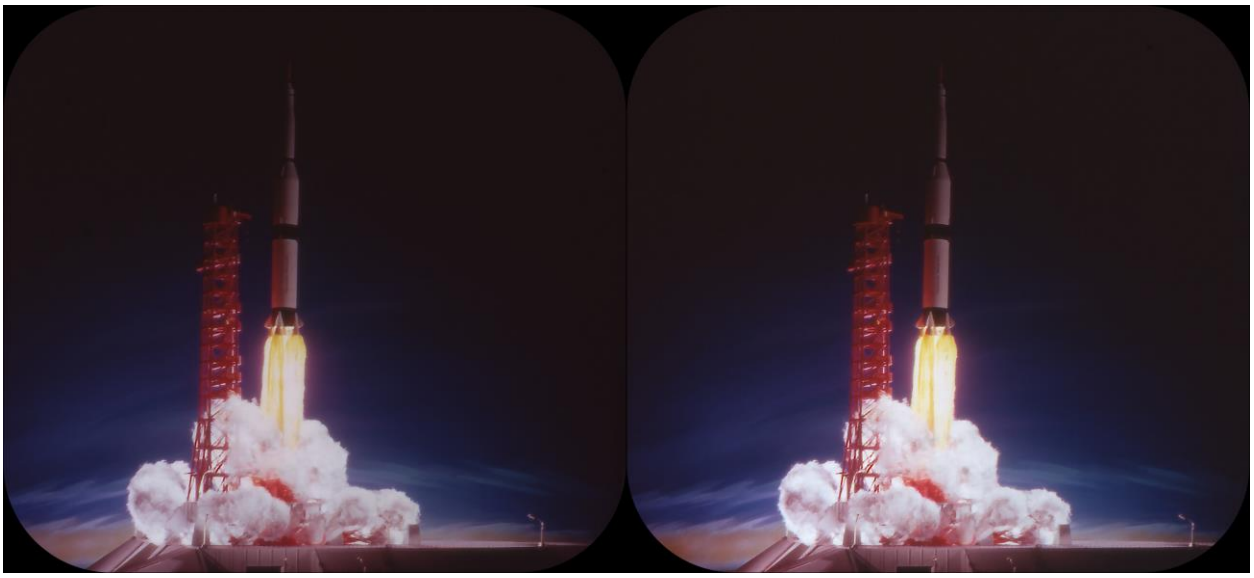
The Prehistoric Animals packet was released much later as a science packet with no references to the original movie. It had the scenes in a different order and muddy colors compared to the original packet. It had more emphasis on the science.

1962 B6572 10 America's Man in Space –
Glenn underwent exacting medical exam in full space suit

This packet showed the first orbital flight by John Glenn. It shows the preparations, lift off, and recovery. In addition it dedicates one reel to details of the suborbital capsule and of the orbital chimpanzee flight that preceded Glenn's flight.

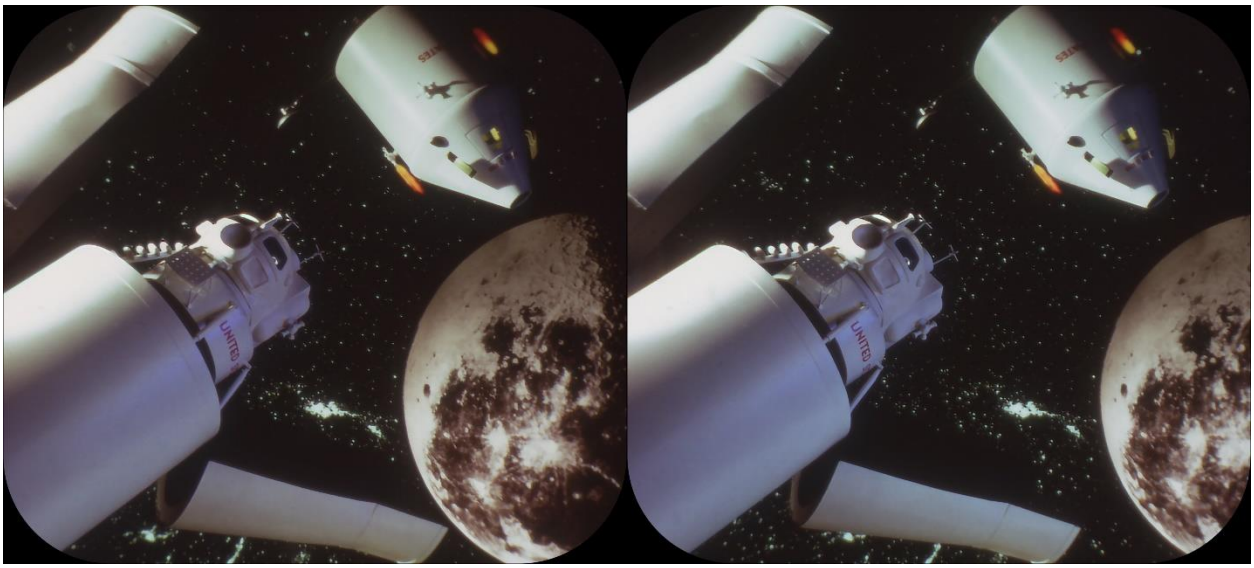


1962 B6573 18 America's Man in Space –
Model shows Glenn's historic flight as seen from space



1964 B658 Project Apollo 04 "5-4-3-2-1-IGNITION" The rocket lifted off

This packet was a set of dioramas created by by Lelia Heath, Frank Visage. Based on NASA plans it dramatized the planned Moon landing.



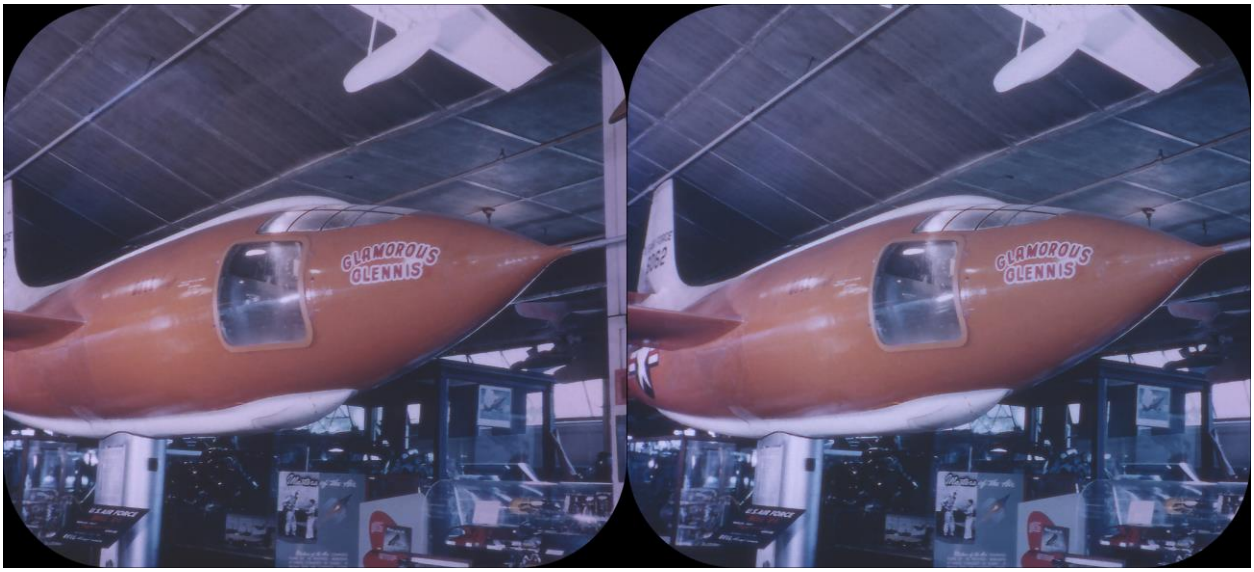
1964 B658 Project Apollo 07 Now came the critical docking operation
These were remarkably accurate dioramas.

1967 B0081 02 Lost Civilizations of Mexico - Mysterious Olmec people carved this 9-foot head

This is a nice survey of some of the fantastic ruins in Mexico and Guatemala. The booklet is a bit outdated because there has been a lot of progress between 1967 and 2017. For example in the early 1980s the Mayan script was finally decoded so the inscriptions on monuments could be read and historical events became known.

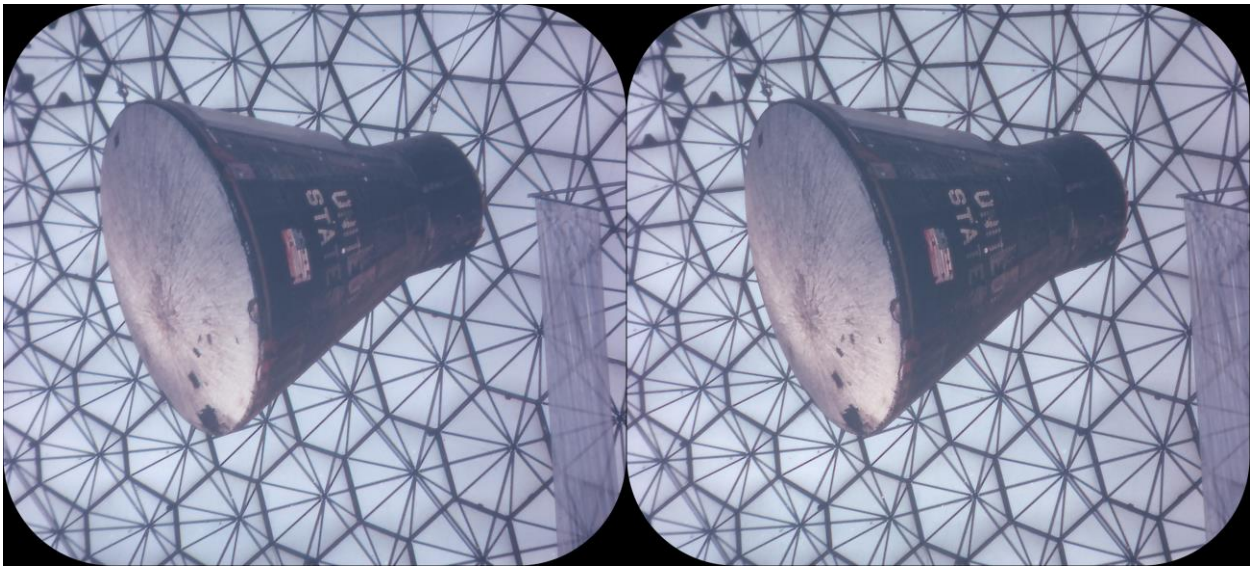
1967 B0082 08 Lost Civilizations of Mexico - Tikal pyramid 200 ft tall was almost buried by jungle

1967 B0082 10 Lost Civilizations of Mexico - Bonampak, 1,100 years old show procession
This is actually a museum reproduction of the original chamber

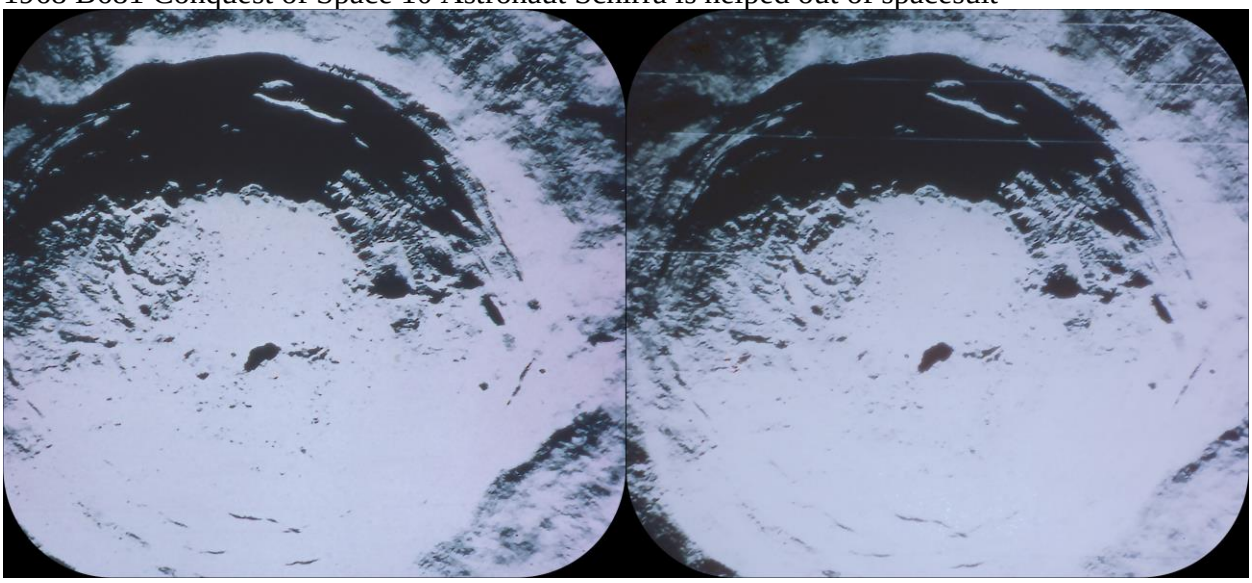


1968 B681 Conquest of Space 01 Rocket powered X-1 plane was first to break sound barrier

This packet shows the actual rockets and shots of the astronauts who participated in the US space program. This packet showed an overview of America's involvement in outer space exploration before the Moon shot. It covers the time period from the first plane to break the sound barrier in 1947 to the lunar orbiter that preceded the actual landing on the Moon.


1968 B681 Conquest of Space 16 Borman and Lovell, in this capsule, orbited for 2 weeks

1968 B681 Conquest of Space 10 Astronaut Schirra is helped out of spacesuit

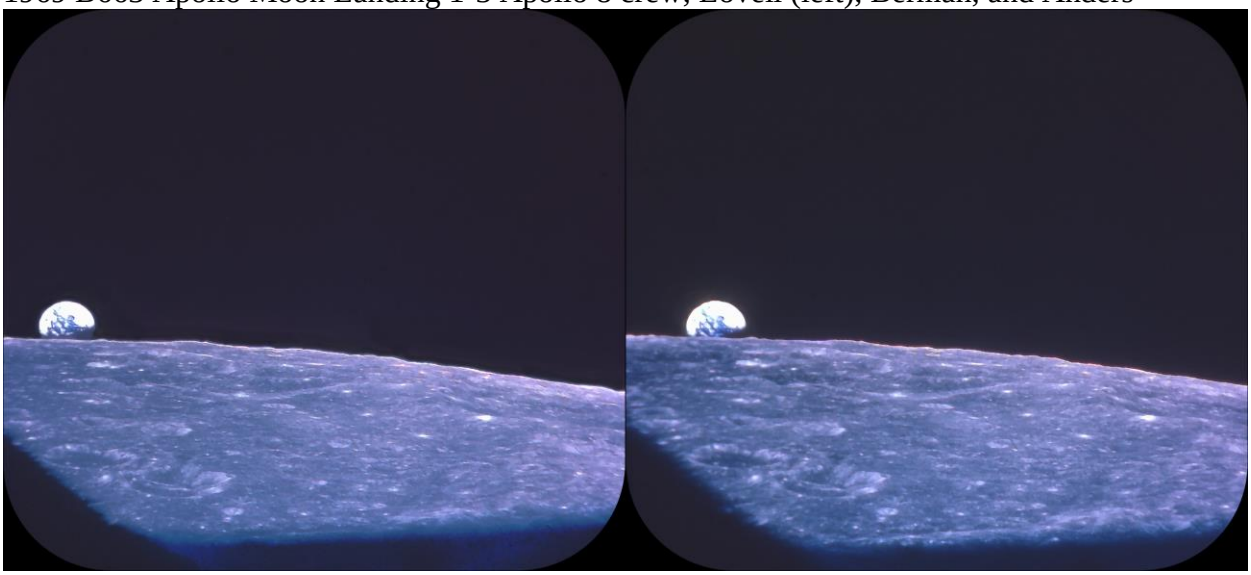


B681 Conquest of Space 18 Lunar Orbiter took this stereo photo of Moon – Alignment adjusted by J. Clement

This historic photo is the first closeup 3D of the Moon's surface. It was a composite of different views taken as the Lunar Orbiter V orbited the moon at an 80 mile altitude. Each frame is a composite of several shots stitched together.

This set of reels has only one photo taken off the Earth, and one of the dioramas from Project Apollo. It includes shots of various historical objects in museums and historical events such as lift off.

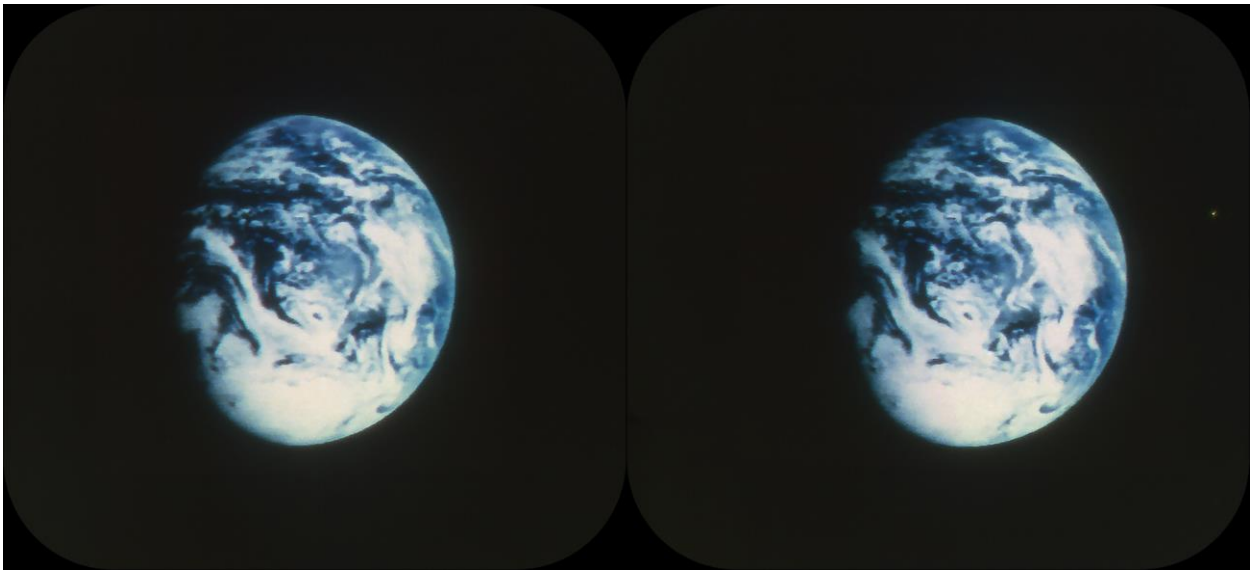
1969 B663 Apollo Moon Landing 1-3 Apollo 8 crew; Lovell (left), Berman, and Anders



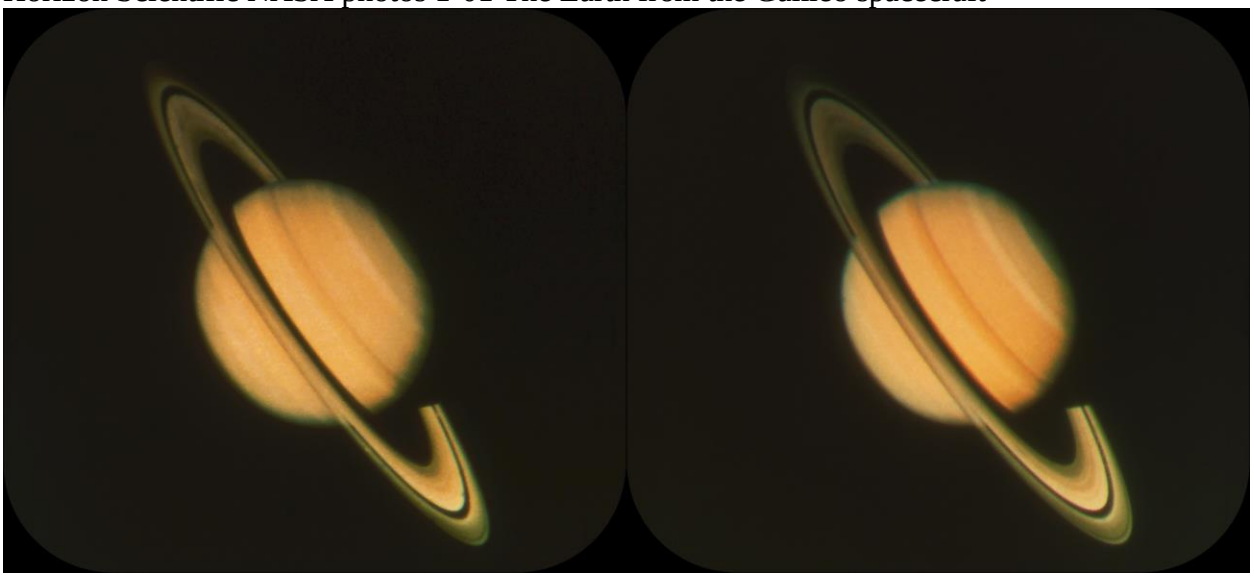
1969 B663 Apollo Moon Landing 1-7 Earthrise seen from the Moon awed crew of Apollo astronauts.

This shot was constructed from two sequential shots as the mother ship circle the moon. Actually that type of 3D shot was done in the 1800s by photographing the moon at different times as it librates.

B663 covers the Apollo Moon landing with Earth based photos, space shots, and pictures on the Moon. The three Moon pictures are not 3D, but are posed behind the frame to simulate 3D.



Horizon Scientific NASA photos 1-01 The Earth from the Galileo spacecraft



Horizon Scientific NASA photos 2-6 Saturn from Voyager 2

These reels were marketed by Horizon Scientific and manufactured by View-Master Portland on Kodachrome film at unknown dates. The pictures are public domain taken by NASA. While not officially Science Series they certainly qualify. They have no booklets and no reel titles. The alignment was often poor so they were often hard to view before restoration and realignment.

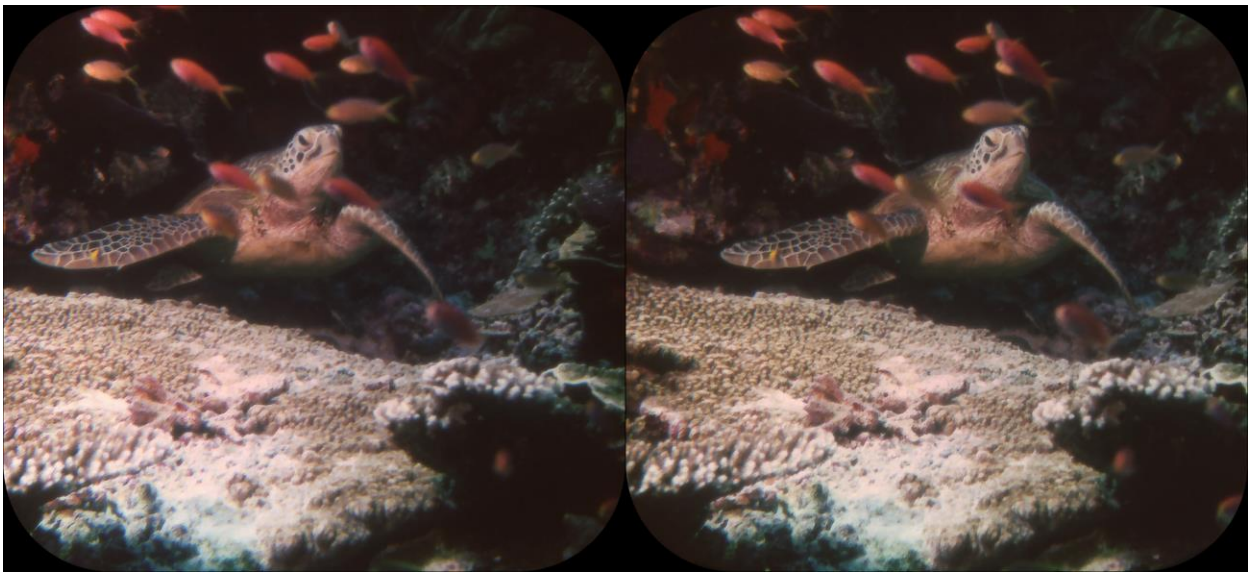
1967 B675 Our Planet Earth 02 Oregon coast scene typifies interplay of sea, wind, land

1967 B675 Our Planet Earth 10 San Juan River carved its loops deep into Utah rocks

1967 B675 Our Planet Earth 21 Time transforms all landscapes; Grand Canyon will pass away
This picture was originally from Reel #26 published in 1948.

This packet has many wonderful pictures illustrating geological events. As far as I can tell the geology seems to be reasonably accurate. The pictures are very nice, but the depth is sometimes limited because of the great distances between the camera and the subject. The beautiful photography is republished from some of the best scenic reels. In 1967 View-Master still had the original Kodachrome slides, before they were trashed by GAF, so they could beautifully reproduce the original photos taken up to 19 years earlier.

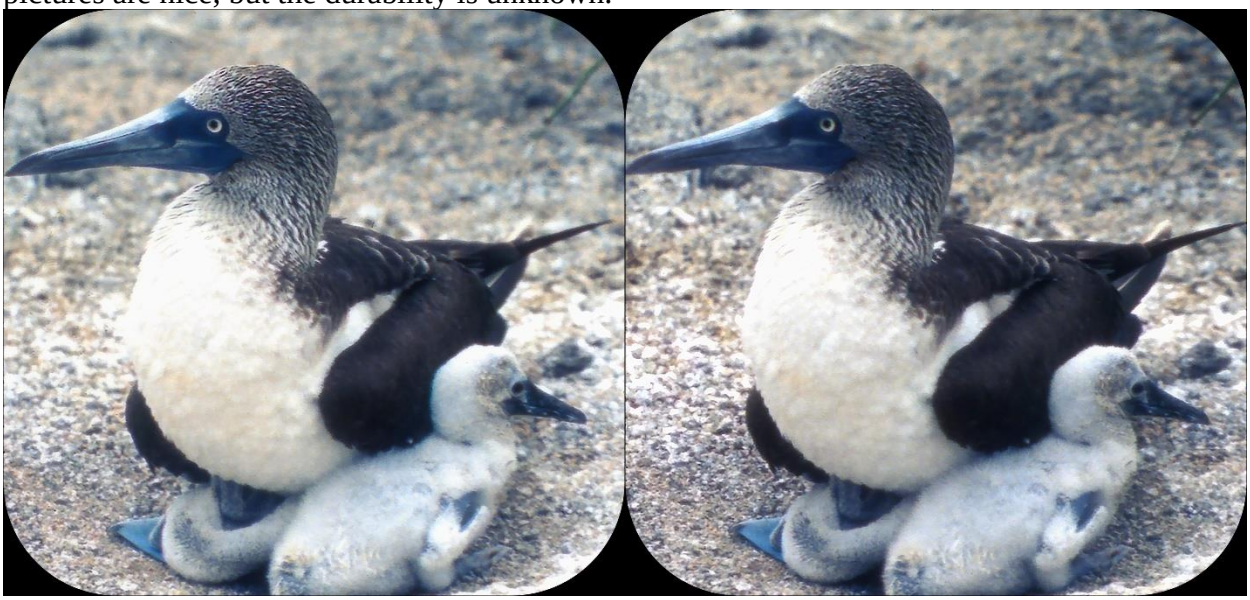
Windows on the Sea 02 French Angelfish (Netherlands Antilles)



Windows on the Sea 16 Green Sea Turtle (Sipadan Island, Sabah, Malaysia)

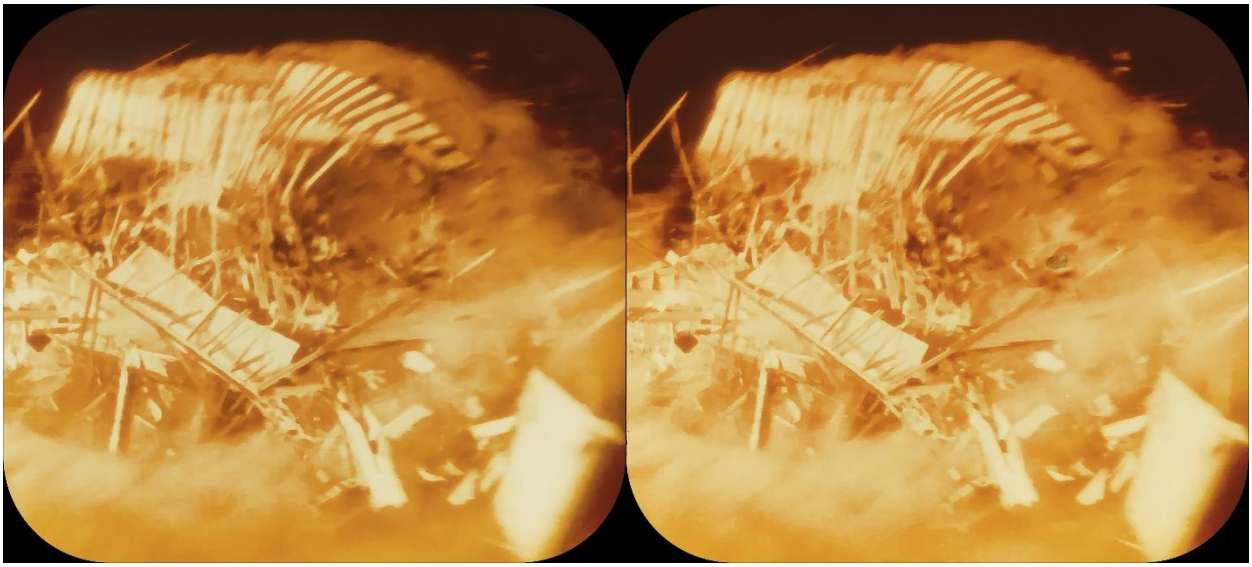
This series of reels was photographed by Mark Blum and released in 1994. All of the pictures have wonderful color and depth in 3D. Some of the pictures must be seen in 3D to be able to perceive the subject. The packet folder contains more information about the photos. The pictures were released on a fairly stable film stock that has not yet faded as of 2017. Most reels released between 1978 to 1981, and after 1998 are subject to fading. The photographer also released his 3D pictures in books.

A new packet containing 2 reels, “Animals of the Galapagos” is also by the same author. It show creatures unique to the Galapagos with some slight extra explanation on the packet folder. The pictures are nice, but the durability is unknown.



Animals of the Galapagos 01 - Blue Footed Booby with chicks-LR

C4625-1910A 4 Atomic Tests in 3D - Dummies were put into these houses to portray people.



C4625-1910B 5 Atomic Tests in 3D - The house is blown to pieces from the shockwave

The Atomic Tests in 3D blister pack shows various stages of a nuclear bomb test in 1955, as well as the test site around 2005. The pictures during the explosion look like miniatures because the cameras were widely separated. The explosion pictures were probably colorized to enhance the effect. The explosion pictures were taken from videos recorded by separate cameras at various locations, and the videos have been shown on TV. Because of the separate cameras there are some lighting difference between the left and right views as well as some stereoscopic misalignment. This set is not labeled as science, but certainly qualifies in that category.

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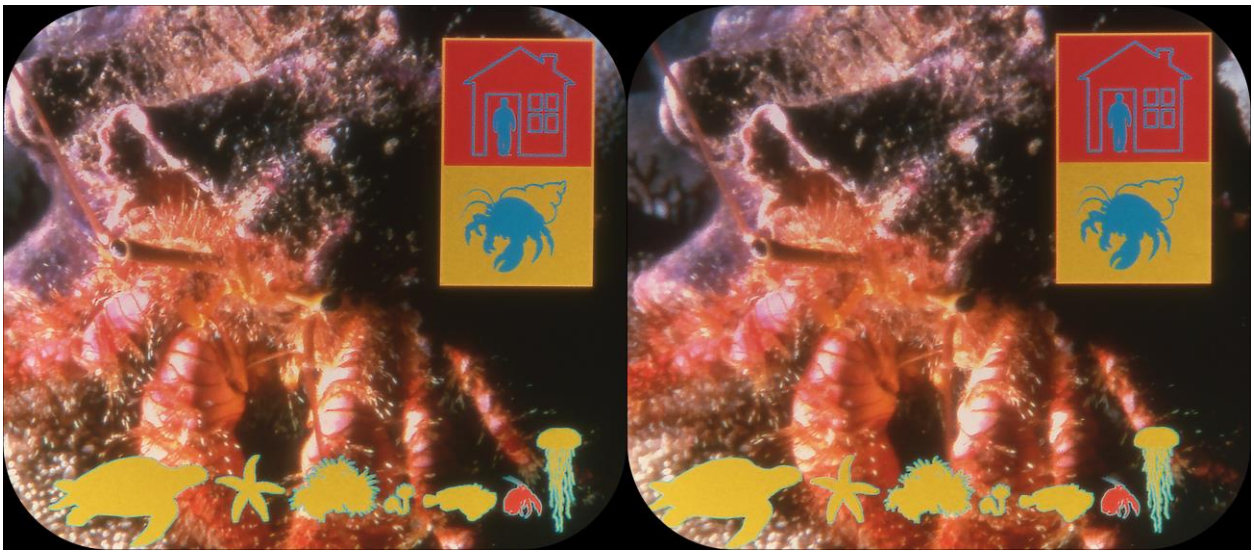

1998 34719 Discovery Channel - Creatures of the Deep B6 Hermit Crab

This series of reels is an educational travelogue created for the Discovery Channel. It is not labeled as being part of the Science Series, but it certainly could have been.

1998 34717 Discovery Channel - On Safari A1 Birds

Since this series lacked booklets, the viewer relied on the captions and pictures. Why on earth didn’t they label them buzzards and point out that they are carrion eaters.

1998 34717 Discovery Channel - On Safari A7 Impala

This is one of several “faked” pictures. The leaping impala is superimposed over the 3D photo background. At this point in time View-Master mainly created non-childrens’ story reels on contract. The Discovery Channel reels were often sold in hard plastic cases and the reel backs were decorated with colorful illustrations. That way younger children could easily identify which reel they wished to view. They also had a special line of Discovery Channel viewers.

“Conquering Space” basically shows pictures issued on previous reels. The items are often digitally enhanced with different backgrounds. The color rendition and resolution is generally poorer than the originals with shallow depth. A timeline is presented on each scene, and a busy little animated figure is also added. The figure adds little to the presentation. I think the pictures were created from old reels as the original slides were probably discarded.

Pictures restored by J. Clement.

Partial list of “Science Series”:

1. 1945 C-1 to C-20 Cactus and Succulents, book illustrations or single reels
2. 1946 WF-1 to WF-10 Wildflower series, book illustrations or single reels
3. 1950 MU-1 to MU-33, book illustrations or single reels
4. 1952 to 1962 Stereoscopic Atlas of Human Anatomy, 221 reels
5. 1954 B612 Wonders of the Deep
6. 1955 B611 Wild Birds of North America
7. 1956 920-A,B,C Battle of the Monsters
8. 1958 B614 Wild Animals of the World
9. 1958 B615 Strange Animals of the World
10. 1959 B656 Moon Rockets and Guided Missles
11. 1956 B619 Prehistoric Animals (Repackaged dioramas from 920, with poorer color)
12. 1964 B658 Project Apollo (dioramas of proposed Moon Landing by Lelia Heath, Frank Visage)
13. 1967 B008 Lost Civilizations of Mexico – Archaeology (probably released earlier)
14. 1967 B677 Rocks and Minerals
15. 1967 B675 Our Planet Earth – Geology
16. 1967 B676 Prehistoric Life – Paleontology
17. 1968 B681 Conquest of Space
18. 1969 B663 Apollo Moon Landing
19. 1969 B682 Matter and Energy
20. 1969 B678 Birds of the World
21. 1969 B680 Plant Kingdom – Botany
22. 1970 B679 Fish Life – Ichthyology
23. 1970 B684 Probing the Past – Archaeology
24. 1971 B686 The Balance of Nature
25. 1972 B687 Exploring the Universe – Astronomy
26. 1972 B688 Insect World
27. 1973 B558 Shedd Aquarium
28. 1976 B621 Sharks
29. 1994 Windows on the Sea by Mark Blum published by 3D Book Productions
30. 1998 34717 Discovery Channel - On Safari
31. 1998 34719 Discovery Channel - Creatures of the Deep
32. 1998 34031 Discovery Channel – Jungle Creatures
33. 1999-2002 34032 Discovery Channel - Secrets of Space
34. 1998 73648 Discovery Channel – Snakes
35. 1998 73939 Discovery Channel – Amazing Primates
36. 1998 38218 Discovery Channel – Reptiles
37. 1998 34030 Discovery Channel – Insects
38. 1998 24715 Discovery Channel – Dinamation Dinosaurs
39. 2005 C4625-1910 Atomic Tests in 3D (1955)
40. 2016 Animals of the Galapagos by Mark Blum published by Dalia Miller
41. Horizon Scientific NASA photos
42. Conquering Space – blister pack

These titles are essentially science related, but not all are labeled “Science Series”. The author has only sampled the ones pictured or mentioned in this article. Many could also just be considered travelogues.